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# Identical letters dated 24 July 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the fifty-third report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) and 2401 (2018) (S/2018/724).

First and foremost, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regrets that the authors of the reports of the Secretary-General and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) continue to take a politicized and negative approach to the Syrian Arab Republic and its institutions. It deplores the fact that, in the report under consideration, the authors continue to ignore its concerns and the questions that it posed to the relevant Secretariat officials and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in its responses to the fifty-first and fifty-second reports and to other previous reports.

The current report, like the previous ones, is far removed from the humanitarian situation in Syria and does nothing to alleviate the plight of Syrians or improve their resilience. The monthly reports have become a mere political tool. They are detrimental to the reputation and credibility of the United Nations in that they have been used by OCHA to serve the interests of certain Western States and their regional proxies.

What follows is an overview of the position of the Syrian Government with respect to the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the report under consideration:

- Day by day, through the efforts of its institutions, with the support of its people and with international backing from the true friends of Syria, who believe in the principles of international law, the Syrian State has achieved important successes on the ground. It is making progress towards liberating Syrian territory from the armed terrorist groups that have spread out among the civilians, used them as human shields, exploited them, recruited their children and appropriated the humanitarian assistance that was intended for them. Indeed, the achievements and momentous efforts of the Syrian national institutions have made it possible to support the Syrian people and ensure that United Nations assistance reaches them.
- Deplorably, the authors of the report do not recognize those achievements, which have had a positive effect by restoring stability to parts of Syria, fighting

terrorism and improving the humanitarian situation of Syrians. What is truly unfortunate is that the authors persist in misleading global public opinion by misrepresenting those achievements and their effects. They make claims regarding the loss of life and displacement of civilians, and other mendacious allegations that come from notorious politicized actors, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), whose reports endorse accounts and information provided by armed terrorist groups. As one example among many, OHCHR and its sources, as well as the representatives of OCHA, persistently fail to inform Member States that the attacks on public hospitals in Dar'a governorate, which are referred to in paragraph 16 of the report under consideration, were carried out by the armed terrorist groups. The authors refer to those groups as "Non-State armed opposition groups", a term that is both inaccurate and inconsistent with the principles of international law and international humanitarian law.

For some time, the Syrian Government has been firmly convinced that the monthly reports have come to reflect the views of Syria's enemies at home and abroad. They pose a threat to the authority and credibility of the United Nations and are inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter of the Organization.

- The Syrian State's counter-terrorism efforts belong in the context of its constitutional mandate and are congruent with the principles of international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The United Nations ought to respond to the situation by increasing its support for Syrians in accordance with humanitarian principles. In particular, it should coordinate with the national authorities of Syria, rather than with the so-called local councils, which are in fact artificial entities subservient to the terrorist organizations and secessionist actors. The authors continue to promote those groups in an unprofessional manner, concocting the claim that they have an important role to play in ensuring humanitarian access.

- The Syrian Arab Republic finds it regrettable that the authors persist in making the same mistakes as in previous reports. In particular, they refer to the armed terrorist groups deployed in Syria, such as those active in Idlib, Dar'a and Qunaytirah as "non-State armed opposition". However, it has been established that the armed terrorist groups are supported by the Governments of well-known States that have involved their fighters, funds and intelligence services in this terrorist war to destroy Syria.

- The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on it by the European Union, the United States of America and other parties are currently the greatest obstacle impeding efforts to provide Syrians' basic needs and improve their livelihood and humanitarian conditions. In the report under consideration, as in previous reports, the authors have deliberately and disgracefully persisted in ignoring that sensitive but vital issue, even though the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs has promised to examine it seriously and thoroughly. The authors of the monthly reports also ignore the United Nations reports issued by the representatives of the United Nations and international organizations active in Syria, which show that those measures have hampered domestic and international humanitarian work in Syria. For instance, in his report and in his latest briefing before the International Syria Support Group, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights has stressed that persisting with the measures would have a dangerous effect on the main sectors involved in the humanitarian response for Syrians, particularly health, education, energy, electricity, water and financial transfers.

- In the report under consideration, the authors endeavour to blur mandates and competences by discussing the political situation and by using numerous politicized terms. The Syrian Arab Republic rejects that approach. Such terms have nothing to do with the authors' mandate or the topic of the report, which is supposed to be about the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian Government is surprised that the authors persist in addressing issues that bear no relation to the humanitarian situation, while completely avoiding another issue that directly affects the humanitarian situation in Syria, namely the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on the Syrian people by the European Union, the United States of America and other parties. That situation reflects the pressure brought to bear on the authors by the Governments of States that have intervened to detrimental effect in the internal affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic. These are the very same Governments that imposed the economic, financial and banking embargo on Syria.

- The authors take a clearly and unacceptably politicized approach by holding the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic responsible for shortfalls in humanitarian access. However, they neglect to mention that the Syrian State has protected civilians in the context of its operations to free them from terrorism. Most recently, the Syrian State has taken action to free southern Syria from terrorism and restore stability and security to civilians in the area. It has provided the necessary support to displaced persons, not a single one of whom has died. It has guaranteed the displaced persons' safety through humanitarian corridors, and returns them to their areas as soon as the operations to free those areas from terrorism have come to a close. The authors' approach raises genuine questions as to whether certain United Nations officials are displeased that the Syrian State has resumed its role in all parts of Syria after defeating the terrorists, or that the unity of the territory and people of Syria has been preserved in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

- In order for all areas of Syria — including, most recently, southern Syria — to be swiftly liberated from terrorism, the United Nations must respond promptly by providing immediate support that is not politicized or discriminatory. OCHA and donors must abandon their lackadaisical approach to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, which has been evident in other regions of Syria. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes the need for increased humanitarian support in order to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of Syrians, especially given the modest level of international financing: to date, only 35 per cent of needs have been met. In their review conferences, donors have tied their funding pledges to political conditions that are incompatible with the principles of humanitarian work. They refuse to fund the restoration of basic service facilities to foster the resilience of Syrians and return Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons to their areas in a safe and dignified manner. The authors neglect to mention these important matters or the so-called conditionalities imposed by providers of funding. This is yet another sign of their lack of seriousness and professionalism in addressing the humanitarian situation in Syria.

- The Syrian State's operations to liberate Syrians in the south of the country from terrorism underscore the fact that the OCHA officials, along with the Governments of the United States of America, Britain, Canada and certain European States have not sought to fulfil the needs of Syrians displaced from the Syrian-Jordanian border. Those Governments and other actors have been more concerned with protecting the armed terrorist groups that have spread across those areas, particularly the members of the terrorist organization known as the White Helmets, who have acted as the logistical and operational arm of the terrorist Nusrah Front, not to mention other terrorist organizations such as

Al-Qaida, and facilitated their terrorist acts against Syrians and the stability of the country and the region. The Governments of those States recently took the disgraceful decision to guarantee the exit of members of members of the terrorist White Helmets organization in coordination with the Israeli occupation and Jordan. They have appealed for the terrorists to be resettled in Germany in coordination, indeed collusion, with OHCHR. The decision effectively rewards that organization and other terrorist organizations associated with it for their members' crimes against Syrians and the institutions of their country. The group has fabricated crime scenes and falsified evidence and information to mislead global public opinion concerning the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria. It has thus created pretexts for the American-French-British aggression on Syria. Moreover, the United States Government recently decided to provide $6.6 million in funding to the terrorist White Helmets organization with a view to ensuring the continuity of its activities in support of the terrorist Nusrah Front and to maintaining its presence in Syria. That measure was taken in lieu of providing assistance to the specialized agencies of the United Nations: the United States of America has stopped its financial contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other international humanitarian organizations. These bitter realities point to international involvement in internal Syrian affairs, and provide further evidence of the nature of the plot to which Syria has been subjected since 2011.

- The Syrian Arab Republic condemns the authors' deliberate failure to mention the effects of the aggression perpetrated by the so-called international coalition and its militias, alongside, Turkey, France and Israel, against Syria and its infrastructure and environment. Unfortunately, the authors have flagrantly tried to cover up the destruction caused by the parties that have attacked and occupied Syria. In paragraph 8 of the report, they provide a contrived and artificially positive image of the situation in the Syrian governorate of Raqqah, which has been almost completely destroyed by the so-called international coalition and its militias.

- The Syrian Arab Republic finds it regrettable that the authors have shamefully caved to pressure from the Governments of certain Western States by promoting cross-border aid. Such aid has been shown to be useless and to prevent aid from reaching civilian beneficiaries in Syria. In one way or another, it provides direct support to the terrorists who gain control of the aid, which has thus played a part in perpetuating terrorist activities in Syria.

- In the light of the foregoing considerations, there is a pressing need for the United Nations humanitarian structure to work seriously to regain the trust of the Syrian Government by adopting a new United Nations approach to the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, one that is based on objectivity, transparency and impartiality. That will be difficult to achieve so long as the United Nations humanitarian framework continues to misrepresent the achievements of the Syrian State and its efforts to meet its people's needs, and so long as the authors of the report continue to indulge the Governments of Western States by ignoring their support for terrorists and their proxies and agents in Syria, and so long as those Governments continue to exploit the humanitarian situation of Syria for their own narrow political agendas.

- The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that, in order to foster respect for the principles of humanitarian work and ensure that the humanitarian needs of Syrians are met now that Syria is on the verge of full liberation from terrorism, the Security Council should stop issuing these monthly reports — which many

see as a waste of time, money and human resources — and replace them with quarterly reports that are written in a professional and credible manner.

I should be grateful if the present identical letters could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Minister Plenipotentiary